

A D D R E S S

BY

ELIPHALET STONE, OF DEDHAM,

DELIVERED AT THE

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION

OF THE

NORFOLK AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

AT

READVILLE,

ON

Friday, September 13, 1872.

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ADDRESS.

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Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is pleasant to be here to-day, assembled with the farmers of Norfolk, and to witness this glorious fruition of their hopes and labors. It is truly the Farmers' Jubilee. To them belong all the credit and glory of this Exhibition, but the joy and felicity of it are shared alike by all classes. Artisan, lawyer, merchant, clergyman, all are here to participate in the rich pleasures of this festival day. And as our eyes rest with delight upon these varied displays of fruit and flowers and other products of agricultural toil presented here to-day, I am sure there is no heart that is not filled with increased respect for the dignity of labor, and with profound gratitude for the bounties and favors of Almighty God.

THE UNITY OF INTERESTS.

Agriculture and civilization have walked the world together since the pastoral age; and although agriculture lies at the foundation of all our interests, still it never could reach its highest usefulness without the stimulus of other industries. A community of farmers isolated from other influences will naturally fall into a state of careless indolence, and will cherish no desire beyond their most common necessities. You propose to them to introduce other interests, and they will look upon it as an invasion of their rights.

But this spell of apathy being once broken by the introduction of manufacturing pursuits, and the agriculturist will awake from his slothful dreams and co-operate with the general progress of things, and wonder that the world moves no faster.

With industry comes economy; and when idleness steps out, energy and manhood step in. With manufacturing industry come all the improvements of the age, — better common roads, railroads and canals; waters that have flowed for centuries untamed to the ocean, now turn the wheels of industry and furnish a highway for the better transportation of the products of the farmer and the manufacturer, creating a home market and cheap carriage for their surplus productions. It is then, and not till then, that the farmer awakes to his own interest. It is then the farmer becomes anxious to probe Nature and wrest from her her richest treasures. His calling assumes a new dignity and importance. It ceases to be a mere means of livelihood, and becomes one of the chiefest instrumentalities of wealth, influence and honor. His land rises in value, his productions are increased, and he supplies himself not only with the necessities of life, but with its luxuries also, and thus becomes a lord in creation. The farmer who produces food and the raw materials for the manufacturer, must in return receive the products of the manufacturer, such as tools, clothing and furniture; and the closer their interests are allied, the greater the profits and the cheaper will be their products to each other.

The produce of the farm especially will not bear a long transportation, as the cost would absorb the whole profit above production. The cost of food that would feed a thousand people at home would not feed five hundred at the distance of a hundred miles, without the ready means of steam or water transportation. Thus it will be seen that a population, combining all these interests in close relation, can supply each others' wants much cheaper and to the material advantage of all; sending the surplus to a foreign market, and

bringing in return such articles as are not produced in the home market, and giving to industry its greatest reward.

The capital expended in the construction of improved means of communication will generally repay the cost in the increase of the value of property situated within the range of its business. It brings the producer nearer his market, and he reaps more equal advantages with those who live nearer the cities and large manufacturing towns. The cost of an article depends not only on the production, but also on the cost of bringing it to market. Coal would be valueless at the mines unless there were other means than human power to transport it to the consumer. But with steam or railroad facilities it becomes cheap fuel thousands of miles from the mine. And the same power brings all parts of a country into close relationship. Thus all branches of industry help and assist each other, and all are made richer and happier.

But the vital utility of manufactures to the farmer is in their *subserviency* to agriculture, by affording to the husbandman a near and steady home *market*. They give him the advantage of two markets instead of one; and instead of quickening the industry and augmenting the resources of other nations, they stimulate and increase the capital and honor of our own. In order to show the more intimate connection between agriculture and its kindred interests, I would refer to a speech of Mr. Stewart, of Pennsylvania, in Congress, on the Woollens Bill of 1828. He said "that he supported the bill from its supposed benefits to agriculture, on the ground that protection to our manufactures created a home market for our farmers which no change in Europe could affect, and prevent the importation of foreign agricultural products to the neglect of our own." He continued: "What is the importation of cloth but the importation of agricultural products? Analyze it, resolve it into its constituent parts or elements, and what is it? Wool and labor. What produces the wool? Grass and grain. What supports labor but bread and meat? Cloth is composed of the grass

and grain that feed the sheep, and the bread and meat that support the laborer who converts the wool into cloth." He also controverted the idea that the encouragement of manufactures was injurious to commerce; and held it to be a sound doctrine, that the prosperity of commerce would always be in proportion to the prosperity of agriculture and manufactures.

Daniel Webster once spoke of agriculture as follows: "It feeds us; to a great extent it clothes us; without it we should not have manufactures, we should not have commerce. They all stand together, like pillars in a cluster, the largest in the centre, and that largest is agriculture." Washington said, "I know of no pursuit in which more real and important service can be rendered to any country, than by improving her agriculture. A skilful agriculture will constitute one of the mightiest bulwarks of which civil liberty can boast." Did he foresee the great struggle through which his country was to pass, and through which it could not have passed triumphantly but with the assistance of this "mighty bulwark" that compelled the South to give up sooner than she would, had not starvation stared her in the face? It was the lack of bacon and corn, as well as the force of our bullets, that gave us the victory. It was the power we held to supply that mighty army with bread, combined with the bone and sinew of our brave farmer boys, that made the North invincible. What could we have done without our railroads? And what interest, more than any other, built our railroads? Agriculture and her associate interests, without which they could not be supported to-day.

Look at California. A little more than twenty short years have passed since the discovery of her gold. For ten years she poured her vast treasures into the lap of the world, and still she was poor in every qualification that makes a State great and prosperous. She was a non-producer of the great staples. She had but little agriculture, although endowed with a rich virgin soil and the finest climate on the continent. She had no manufactures, and consequently but little com-

merce. She was poor indeed with all her gold. She saw her fault, and wisely went to work to correct it. She turned her attention to agriculture and manufactures, and our venerated Honorary President has told us of her present greatness.

There are two periods in the history of our country worthy of note. The first was the action of England towards her colonies previous to the revolution. She held them in such absolute subjection that, besides the common domestic industry and the ordinary mechanical employments, no kind of manufacturing was allowed. In 1750 a manufactory of hats in Massachusetts drew the attention and excited the jealousy of Parliament. All colonial manufactories were declared to be common nuisances, not excepting even forges, in a country possessing in abundance every element for the manufacture of iron. In 1770 the great Chatham, alarmed by the first manufacturing attempts of New England, declared that the colonies ought not to be allowed to manufacture so much as a hob-nail.* Freed from the trammels which had been imposed upon them, and reduced consequently to their own resources for the supply of their wants, the United States found during the war that manufactures of every kind had received a remarkable impulse, and that agriculture was deriving from them such benefits that the value of the soil, as well as the wages of labor, were largely increased in spite of the ravages of war. After the war, the manufactured products of England again found an open door; and encountering the infant manufactures of America in free competition, the latter being unable to sustain themselves, the industry which had sprung up and prospered during the war was extinguished. Our manufacturers were ruined, our merchants, even those who had hoped to enrich themselves by importations, became bankrupt; and all these causes united had such a disastrous influence upon agriculture, that a general depre-

* See List, p. 167; Hinton's U.S., pp. 181-193; Tucker, vol. i. p. 81.

ciation of real estate followed, and failure became general among proprietors. American industry must have perished in that struggle if the embargo, and afterwards the war of 1812, had not come to its relief. In this period, as in that of the war of Independence, the industrial arts received an extraordinary impulse.

Long experience has taught us that agriculture could not arrive at a high degree of prosperity without manufacturing industry. As Jefferson said, "The prosperity of the country can only be fixed upon a solid basis where the manufacturers are placed side by side with the agriculturists." Allow me to quote from an address given by Hon. Thomas Allen before the Berkshire Agricultural Society last year. He said, "The stimulus given to production by the late civil war, causing high prices, induced such an increase in the manufacture of agricultural machinery and implements as to more than fill the place of the million of men drawn into the ranks of the army; and the consequence was, that this nation exhibited an example, such as has been never seen in all history, of a people supporting a consuming army of a million in the field of war, yet not only filling the gap, but actually so increasing their domestic products as to create a larger surplus for exportation than ever before. As compared with 1860 and the years previous, these exports, except cotton only, were actually doubled during the war; and thus our agriculture not only supplied food for the masses of the people and for the army and navy, but gold for the public treasury. What a proud monument is that to the skill of our mechanics and the enterprise of our farmers! For who can say that but for this wonderful spirit aroused and developed in agriculture, our soldiers could not have been sustained, and the war might have been a failure?"

I think I have shown you that the cultivators of the soil stand pre-eminent among the great industrial classes in our country; that they feed all other classes and produce all the raw material for the other interests, and constitute the main

supporting element of our commerce. I have not lessened the importance of any other interest, but have shown that all stand together in harmonious relations, and that no one interest can suffer without affecting the whole.

THE INTERESTS OF LABOR.

Wealth of itself means nothing more than the possession of something that has a market value and not possessed by the generality of men. It is only a benefit in the highest degree or sense when its blessings are diffused among all classes. The legitimate purpose of wealth is to ameliorate the human condition as much as possible by furnishing to man the means of physical comfort and enjoyment, and opening a way for his highest moral and intellectual improvement. To be effective, Capital and Labor must be on good terms. There is no natural antagonism between them. The true relations of capital and labor are best maintained where there is the greatest freedom of competitive industry, and where each is sure of its reward. If injustice comes between them, both must suffer, and in any contention Labor must suffer first, as her wants are immediate; Capital can stand a longer siege. Both their interests grow out of the wants and demands of the community; and they ought not to be circumscribed, unless they interfere with morality and the public good. It is to capital we owe our public and private prosperity, and labor partakes as much of its benefits as capital, and oftentimes more. It may be and sometimes is the case, owing to peculiar circumstances, as in some kinds of business during the late war, that capital for the time being may reap a greater reward than labor; still the time always comes when the tables are turned and labor receives more in proportion than capital. As an illustration of this principle, let us take the woollen manufacturing interests during the late war. Some of these interests enjoyed unprecedented prosperity. The natural effect was to turn into that channel all the available machinery of the country. The war ending

suddenly, left this vast amount of machinery in full operation, and consequently the supply soon exceeded the demand. Instead of stopping or turning a part into other channels, thus reducing the product to the actual demand, the manufacturer, feeling his strength in the accumulated profits of the past, continued to manufacture until the surplus was thrown on to an overstocked market, and consequently prices fell, in some cases even below the cost of the raw material. The splendid fortunes made during the continuance of the war soon vanished, and hundreds of millions were thus lost to the capitalists. Fortunate was it for the country, and more especially for the laboring classes, that the capitalists heeded not the warnings of prudence. Had they stopped manufacturing, it would have depressed all other kinds of business, and deprived the laborer of his employment, and created untold misery and suffering. But on the contrary, wages continued at war prices, and still continue, notwithstanding the decline in the prices of food and clothing. It could be shown that every dollar lost by the manufacturer was paid in wages to the laborer. The laborer continued on in prosperity while the capitalist lost all. Consider the benefits the laborer and the community derived from this sacrifice of capital. It took the splendid fortunes of the past and diffused them through the community.

The true interests of the country are promoted where these powerful industrial elements operate in sympathy and attract instead of repelling each other. We want no antagonism where all ought to confederate for the common good. When we foster the great productive forces which feed and clothe humanity, we bring each calling into amity and reciprocity with all other callings. Thus the great harp of labor with its thousand strings, touched as with a master's hand, will vibrate in harmony through all the land. Mighty are the achievements that spring from the union of capital and labor; but their noblest offspring are the homes of our people. It is these that make the chief glory of New Eng-

land. Go where you will, and more especially in the vicinity of her cities and large villages, and you will find numerous rural homes, owned generally by the occupants, and surrounded by beautiful trees and flowers and tasteful gardens. These are not the houses of the rich alone : a majority, a large majority, belong to the middle and even poorer classes.

There is not a spot on the continent where the people are so well fed and so comfortably housed as in the "Old Bay State." There is no spot on this beautiful earth where the poorer classes are so well fed, so well clothed and so well to do, in all that confers comfort and happiness upon the individual. There is no place where the laborer receives greater reward for his toil, where he can enjoy so many blessings, free as the air he breathes, as here in our own New England. Our schools are free to all, ignorance has no excuse, and the poor shall not want.

The character of a people may always be correctly judged by their surroundings ; and it is these influences that have made us what we are, — the most moral and the best educated, as a whole, in the world. The spirit of our institutions being against large landed proprietors, brings the different classes more closely into communion of tastes and habits ; and a correct taste once formed in a community becomes diffused through the whole, thus elevating the whole mass. Let the political hucksters who are prowling up and down the land, striving to create an antagonism between the laborer and his employer, turn their attention to the bettering the condition of the honest poor in their home surroundings, and they would confer a real blessing upon the whole community. Let them associate with others having capital ; let them secure lands in healthy locations, lay out streets and ornament them with trees and shrubs, and build neat and comfortable dwellings ; then let them take these men by the hand, and say to them, "One of these homes can be yours if you will ; industry, economy and sobriety will make

them yours ;” and they will thus open a fountain in that man’s heart that has been closed to its own interests by the ice of envy and jealousy.

The cry of these agitators is, “We must elevate labor.” Yes ; but you must elevate the laborer first. You cannot raise the stream above the fountain. The thermometer of manhood will indicate every degree of excellence ; and when the mercury has risen above the freezing point of the lower passions into the genial warmth of a higher manhood, then, and not till then, will his virtues bud and blossom. To elevate the laborer you must first create a desire in him to better his condition ; then show him a plausible way to do it. Desire is the mainspring to all endeavor, both good and evil ; and when the desire of a man goes no further than to work that he may eat and drink, there is not much chance to dignify labor. Inspire the laborer with new incentives, awaken a laudable self-esteem, and he will work with a will. Assure him he may have a comfortable homestead for his family, and the motive to exertion will put the eight and ten hour system out of his mind. The allurements of home will absorb all inclination to roam from place to place. He will discover that he has something to live for, and thus become a satisfied, loyal citizen, a sustainer of the laws that before seemed enacted for his oppression. To place before men reasonable objects of ambition, and exalt their aims, is praiseworthy in the sight of all men. There are but few natures so lost to the dignity of manhood that they will betray the confidence reposed in them.

The interest of agriculture is the interest of humanity. Seven eighths of the population of the most civilized nations are engaged in it, and it mainly feeds the inhabitants of the globe, estimated at more than one thousand millions. Nevertheless there exists a prejudice against farming. This is not all from the outside. There is a lack of confidence among the farmers themselves. They think that other interests and professions make a greater show in the world ;

that it is easier to get riches and honor in the workshop or counting-room than on the farm. This is erroneous; but still the influence of this impression is as injurious as though it were actually true. Therefore any measures calculated to instill a greater respect for the farmer's calling will in a measure effect a cure. What we want is to create an enthusiasm among the farmers, make them feel that their calling is respectable and respected. They will thus receive a fresh impulse and inspiration. Let our young men but imbibe this spirit, and they will impart it to all with whom they come in contact. The farm is the great nursery of all the professions as well as the industrial arts of the country. From the hills and valleys of New England, fresh and vigorous come the strong recruits to fill the vacant places of honor, influence and power. The heated air of the factory, workshop and counting-room is not conducive to the growth of substantial men. These only grow to perfection in the free air of our hillsides and valleys; and "the nearer the soil, the better the stock."

We always speak of the farmer's profits comparatively. We compare his success with that of the merchant or manufacturer, and even then we do not take them generally, but individually. We take isolated cases of success. In considering the profitableness of farming we should remember that farmers nowhere live so well and spend so much money on themselves and families as in New England. In the language of another, "There are none that make the soil contribute so much to the soul and character; none who use such excellent instruments; none who have more convenient buildings; none who educate their children better, and none whose real manhood is more purely developed in all the important relations of life."

The present is a fast age, especially with us Yankees. Everybody is in a hurry to get rich, and few are willing to bide their time and patiently pursue the intermediate steps necessary to obtain this result. We all want to begin where our fathers left off. But experience teaches us that success

is rarely obtained except through patient industry persistently pursued through many years. It is only time and industry that build the fabric stately and strong. It is the restlessness and impatience that cause so many failures in life; and the farmer is no exception to this rule. But more persons succeed in agriculture, in proportion to the number employed in it, than in any other calling. Certain conditions are requisite to success in any business; and with these secured, prosperity is sure to follow.

One great secret of success in any business is a love of the calling. One's heart must be in it. He must have faith and confidence, and then go ahead. Again, he must understand his calling. If the farmer ploughs deep he must manure accordingly. So, too, he must be frugal, turning everything into grist. If we gather hay we must rake after, as success often depends upon the gleanings. It is the last ounce that tips the scale.

I have said that the condition of a people may be correctly judged by their surroundings. This is particularly true of the farmer. Go where you will, and you can tell a thrifty farmer the moment your eye rests on his grounds. Whatever a man loves to do he will generally do well, and he will do it with an earnestness that overcomes all obstacles. On the contrary, where there is indifference nothing is done as it should be. When the farmer is earnest he is enthusiastic, and his work is a pleasure and delight; and order, neatness and happiness are the result. The man who is a farmer by accident or force of circumstances, and has no love for the calling, can never succeed. His fingers are as stiff and cold as his heart, and they will not work. I assure you, my friends, that there is nothing that adds a more abiding charm and satisfaction to one's life and experience than the pursuit of agriculture. You, Mr. President, will allow me to quote from a most able address, given before this Society more than twenty years ago by one of its founders and most noble benefactors, whose memory "still lives" in the hearts of its

members, and will be cherished long after those that knew him here shall have passed away.

He said, "The desire to get rid of farm work should not exist among the young men of an agricultural people; and yet it would be uncharitable to keep them all at home when the cities cannot live without them. It is the fresh activity of the country that feeds the healthy growth and vigor of the town; and the most distinguished instances of success in professional, mercantile or mechanical life may be traced back to the farm. The raw boy who to-day makes his first acquaintance with the crowded street, in everybody's way, as he stares with dazzled eyes and open mouth at the shop windows and moving wonders about him, will in a few years be found one of the conscript fathers of the city; a leader among the able and enterprising, a founder of public charities, a benefactor to the poor, a man of great heart and open hand, mighty in the money market, yet not unmindful that he began with nothing, and ready to assist and encourage those who are starting on the same capital. Go to the luxurious mansion of this successful man when he shall have obtained the full zenith of prosperity. Ask him, as he is surrounded by everything that is supposed to make existence desirable, on what portion of his eventful life he looks back with most satisfaction. Will he dwell on commercial gains, or professional eminence, or political honors? Oh, no! He will turn coldly from these aims of his uneasy life back to the time when he knew nothing of the busy world before him, and he will glow with pride as he honestly boasts of his former skill with the scythe, or of the rods of stone wall he assisted to lay on his father's farm. He will tell you that often as he has struggled in the hard battle of life, when disappointment, which comes to all, has visited him, and as he has been weighed down by a sense of the worthlessness of the prize which has been the object of his exertions, the happy spot where he once played and worked has arisen before him to rebuke him with the peace he abandoned. He

will say how he has hoped to have, one day, some quiet spot where the evening of life could glide tranquilly on amidst the repose and beauty of nature; how he has longed to live again among the holy things of his early days, which have had an influence on the better part of his life. He will tell how his sleep has been tinged with recollections of the past, dreaming over his boy-time once more; hearing the song of birds, as it used to come in the twilight through the windows, mingled with the breath of the honeysuckle, and feeling again the south wind play in the raven locks of his childhood.”*

These truthful words,—

“They haunt me still, though many a year has fled,
Like some wild melody;”

and will, so long as my memory shall hold its throne. And I am happy in the thought that the spotless mantle of this most estimable man has fallen upon a son who is worthy to bear it.

Had the principles of agricultural reform and improvements been as well understood as the principles which govern our mercantile interests, and been as well applied, our New England farms would not present the barren spectacle which in some instances we now behold. You cannot violate the laws of the soil any more than you can the laws which govern your physical system. Similar laws govern both. Nature will supply the demands of growth according to her resources; and when exhausted, must receive back the elements of which she has been robbed, or she refuses longer to yield her wonted harvest. Science enjoins upon agriculture the condition of a self-sustaining vitality. Whatever is taken from the soil by the harvest must be returned to it again; otherwise a great injury is inflicted, not only upon

* The late Hon. George R. Russell.

the farmer but upon the whole country. It has been truly said, "To destroy the productiveness of the soil, to squander the elements of that productiveness, is to destroy the hopes of civilized humanity, and rob posterity of its birthright to a career of progress." We are the agents in the employ of nature to prosecute and improve her interests; and in order to do this understandingly we must be fully acquainted with her workings. We must understand the action of light, heat, moisture and the properties of vegetable growth; how this plant food is formed, and how and in what manner the plant takes up and appropriates that food to its own use; the effect of cropping upon the soil, and the condition of the soil under any circumstances; the causes of fertility; the effects of ploughing, underdraining, irrigation, &c.

There is a love of nature instinct in every living soul. This, if rightly influenced, may conduce to the highest interests of agriculture. The mind is ever active, and possesses the quality of curiosity to a large degree. It must know the why and wherefore of external objects, and their relations, and it receives pleasure in the effort to obtain this knowledge, and the possession but creates a desire to know more and more. New ideas and emotions excite and perpetuate the mind's activity, which is essential to our enjoyment. Nature is boundless; she is a complete laboratory; she is full of information. The sciences applicable to agriculture are the key to unlock and disclose to the inquiring mind her mysteries.

My friends, the future prospects of agriculture in this country cannot be misunderstood. The rapid improvements that are being made in the machinery of the farm, show that the mind as well as the muscle is actively at work; that the days of ignorant toil are fast giving way to the united efforts of the head and hand; that the prejudices which have surrounded the tillers of the soil like mists around the mountain's summit, are being gradually dispelled through the influence of an enlightened understanding. The farmer is

about to assume his rightful place at the head of our industrial pursuits. The Agricultural College and the Institute of Industrial Science are both established on a firm foundation. Through the instrumentality of these twin institutions of our Commonwealth, the farmer and mechanic will be raised to a loftier position of dignity and influence, with an enlarged power of blessing, not only themselves, but the world.

The time is coming when the rudimentary principles of agriculture and the mechanic arts will be branches of learning to be taught in our common schools. The time is not far distant when the living language of nature, as interpreted by Geology, Botany and Vegetable Physiology will be like "household words" with the farmer, who will then go forth and see how the silent chemistry of nature, like a mighty architect, builds up the gorgeous fabric of the vegetable creation, alike stately, delicate and beautiful. So will the farmer's calling be ennobled and invested with the fascinations of intellectual grace and beauty.

And now, in conclusion, I congratulate you again upon the success of your labors for the past season. In the few words I have spoken I am conscious of having said little that is not already familiar to you all. But if I have succeeded in impressing upon you something of my own conviction of the dignity, importance and usefulness of New England Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, I shall be more than content. Although we New Englanders are not known as an agricultural people, still to my mind there is nothing that adds more to her culture, comfort and happiness than her Agricultural and Horticultural interests. They are the essential elements in her domestic economy, without which the grand harmony of New England's industries would be incomplete. Forever may the mower's scythe and the harvester's flail ring in unison with the weaver's shuttle and forgerman's anvil!

Whatever adds to the glory and character of New England it behooves us to sacredly foster and transmit. We love thee, New England, land of peace, prosperity and plenty!

We hail thee leader in the world's grand progress. Strangers and wanderers seek refuge in thine open arms, with benedictions. Thou hast enough and to spare.

“ Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege
Through all the years of this our life to lead
From joy to joy ; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.”

